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E.O. 12958: DECL: AFTER KOREAN REUNIFICATION
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [KS](#) [KN](#)
SUBJECT: ROK MOFAT AND NSC ON UNSC RESOLUTION: CHAPTER 7
UNACCEPTABLE

REF: A. SEOUL 2296
[1](#)B. STATE 114019

Classified By: Amb. Alexander Vershbow. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) In a follow-up to the Ambassador's meeting with FM Ban Ki-Moon and series of telcons with NSA Song Min-soon (Ref A), A/DCM called on MOFAT Director General for North America Cho Tae-yong and NSC Director General Lim Sung-nam to urge the South Koreans to support the Japanese draft of the UNSCR on North Korean missile launches (Ref B). Cho said, firmly, that "Chapter 7 is the issue" preventing the ROKG from supporting the draft resolution. Cho cited July 12 press statements by Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon to the effect that invocation of Chapter 7 would open new possibilities and would have negative ramifications for the security situation on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia. Cho asked that the USG and other governments consider the merits of the ROKG argument. Cho also conveyed to us, in a subsequent telephone call after the meeting, that the ROKG would support five-party talks in connection with the ASEAN Regional Forum meetings in Kuala Lumpur, or, if Chinese opposition made that infeasible, a trilateral meeting between the U.S., ROK, and Japanese foreign ministers in KL.

[1](#)2. (C) In a separate meeting, NSC DG Lim said that the Blue House decided to intervene because the mention of Chapter 7 could lead to military actions in the future, a view reinforced by the remarks of Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe. Lim said that the Blue House was disappointed that such a tough resolution could be drafted without any high-level consultations with Seoul. (Comment: We understand that IO brief the ROK Embassy in Washington last week; moreover, A/S Hill's meetings over the weekend revealed broad support for a meaningful resolution. Our guess is that President Roh was out of the loop initially; subsequently, he became suspicious, especially upon hearing Abe's remarks.) END
SUMMARY.

MOFAT Response

13. (SBU) In a July 12 meeting with MOFAT DG Cho Tae-yong, A/DCM conveyed Ref B points emphasizing that Washington was very concerned that Seoul had taken such a visibly different position on the draft UNSCR. Given the gravity of the North Korean action, a Chapter 7 resolution was an entirely appropriate response for the international community.

14. (SBU) In response, Cho cited "carefully chosen words" from Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon's July 12 press statements (Cho's translation from Korean text):

-- "The ROK government has to be careful/cautious about (Chapter 7) because invocation of Chapter 7 has certain implications and opens certain future possibilities that may have negative ramifications for the situation on the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia."

-- On Japan: "we believe our expression of our legitimate concerns must not be construed as a diplomatic row between Japan and Korea over North Korea's missile launches, nor be construed as my government being less than forthcoming on the UNSC discussion on North Korea's missile launches. The ROK government is working to maintain a decisive posture on this issue and will work with related countries and join the international community, including discussions in the UNSC."

15. (C) Cho said that the ROKG could agree with all of the draft UNSC resolution except for the invocation of Chapter 7. He said that he had learned that only 62 of all UNSC resolutions to date had invoked Chapter 7, and that of these only 16 also contained specific measures. He added that the ROKG believed that the DPRK actions, while very serious, did not merit the invocation of Chapter 7.

16. (C) On contacts with Japan, Cho said ruefully that Japanese Embassy officials had told him last Friday (July 7) that Japan wanted swift UNSC action, whether a resolution or a Presidential Statement, so that it showed the Japanese public an immediate result; there was no mention of Chapter 7 at that time. He said further that, "barring another provocation from across the straits (Japan), we will make an effort not to heighten the rhetoric level." He asked A/DCM to understand that when Japan is involved, issues become emotional. He cited a survey of National Assembly members that apparently revealed that most were worried about last week's DPRK missile launches but that all agreed with the ROKG's stance on Japan.

Blue House Response

17. (C) NSC Director General Lim requested a meeting with A/DCM to give the "Blue House perspective," because decisions had been made at "the highest level." Lim said that under Blue House instructions, MOFAT had told the Japanese that the ROKG:

-- Had grave concerns regarding the North Korean missile launches; appropriate measures had to be taken to discourage Pyongyang from future missiles launches;

-- Supported strongly the efforts of the UNSC to take such measures;

-- Had serious reservations, however, that the resolution contained references to Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which could be interpreted to include military actions in the future;

-- Expressed deep concerns that such a resolution involving the Korean Peninsula could have been proposed without prior consultations with Seoul.

17. (C) Lim said that the ROKG was fully aware that the draft resolution and its reference to Chapter 7 did not mean an immediate or direct call for military action. But, as always, a mention of Chapter 7 rang alarm bells, and this was

not different. Perhaps things might have been different had there been high-level consultations with Washington or Tokyo. Simply put, Seoul was caught unaware; the ROKG did not know whether the Chapter 7 reference was "tactical or the end-goal."

¶18. (C) A/DCM assured Lim that the Chapter 7 reference was not tactical and that Washington was committed to the current draft.

Comment

¶19. (C) MOFAT and NSC foreign policy advisors are quite embarrassed at how things have turned out. In private conversations they have told us that Seoul had missed an opportunity to put some heat on China, and that Seoul might have had the same result without the public display of a gap with Washington. At the same time, we get the impression that even seasoned diplomats and senior foreign policy-hands in Seoul do not quite appreciate the gravity and seriousness of the North Korean action, especially for Washington and Tokyo.

¶10. (C) Regarding the South Korean complaint of lack of consultations, we would note that IO briefed the ROK Embassy before the resolution was put in blue. Moreover, A/S Hill's consultations over the weekend with senior ROK officials revealed broad support for a "tough" resolution, with no one raising the Chapter 7 issue. In the end, such support could not overcome President Roh's inherent suspicions and, perhaps more important, his political instinct to play the "Japan card."

VERSHBOW